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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SAMANA (Papua New Guinea)
(Vice-Chairman)

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AGENDA ITEM 79: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS (continued)

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In the absence of Mr. Hudyma (Ukraine), Mr. Samana (Papua New Guinea) Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 79: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS (continued) (A/48/403; A/49/114-S/1994/357, A/49/136, A/49/228-S/1994/827, A/49/287-S/1994/894 and Corr.1, A/49/335, A/49/336, A/49/479; A/C.4/49/L.12)

1. Mr. KOVANDA (Czech Republic) said that his delegation had participated as an observer in the work of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations and that some of its proposals had been included in that Committee's final report. The Czech Republic supported the view of Brazil and other countries that, given the evolution of peace-keeping operations over recent years, the Special Committee should be expanded so as to include observer countries interested in membership, especially if their interest was substantiated by an active role in peace-keeping. The Czech Republic would be very interested in becoming a member of the Special Committee.

2. The Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretariat, through close cooperation and coordination, and supported by a responsible attitude on the part of all Member States, must continue to focus their attention on the expansion of peace-keeping operations. The current situation was that safeguarding peace and security required not only the supervision of a military status quo agreed to by the parties, but frequently involved a much more robust military posture, as well as challenging humanitarian and political responsibilities.

3. The Security Council had recently adopted two resolutions extending for the last time the mandate of a peace-keeping operation, namely the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) and the United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II). The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, in his address to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, had invited the United Nations to study the lessons from operations that had already concluded so as to identify their success factors. In the case of ONUMOZ those factors had included a well-crafted peace plan, a realistic mandate, the maturity of the country's politicians, the tenacity of the United Nations personnel involved, notably the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and good luck in the timing of the operation.

4. It had become much more difficult to secure troop contributions for operations in the wake of developments in Somalia. Two factors were absolutely critical to the success of a peace-keeping operation: the political will in the country to resolve the conflict and the existence of a good peace plan. In Somalia the warring factions did not seem even to agree that there ever had been a peace plan.

5. It was essential to prevent situations from reaching a flash point. Preventive diplomacy was very cost-effective, although it entailed difficulties that should not be underestimated. One such difficulty stemmed from the changing nature of the conflicts that the United Nations was involved with. Peace-keeping operations established in recent years had seldom dealt with international conflict in the classic sense. Usually the conflicts were internal. In one way or another many internal conflicts seemed to threaten international peace and security.

6. The internal nature of most conflicts made it imperative for the universality and impartiality of peace-keeping operations to be jealously protected. In several recent instances regional organizations had taken it upon themselves to engage in decisive action in a country in turmoil. That had occurred in countries as disparate as Liberia, Georgia, Rwanda and Haiti. Perhaps that was what happened when a country cried out for help and the United Nations could not provide it, or could not provide it fast enough. What role should the United Nations play when a regional organization or an individual Power organized a multilateral force and became involved in peace-keeping on its own account? The question arose of whether the United Nations should expect or even demand that such involvement should be submitted to the Security Council for its approval and that its own military observers should play a role in such peace-keeping operations, and whether attempts should be made to coordinate financing.

7. It appeared to his delegation that, at least in the short term, special attention should be paid to the modalities of cooperation between United Nations peace-keeping operations and multinational forces. The prerequisites for such cooperation were a congruence of objectives; the existence of time limits for operations by a multinational force; close cooperation, beginning in the planning stages; support from the countries of the region concerned for the peace-keeping operation model selected; the presence of United Nations military observers in the multinational force; and regular reporting to the Security Council. Of course, the risk existed that a world or regional Power would play a far greater role in a multinational force than in a United Nations peace-keeping operation. With the end of the bipolar world former sphere of influence might re-emerge. Precisely because of such risks the United Nations must continue the restructuring of its peace-keeping operations.

8. Mr. IVANOV (Bulgaria) said that over the past few years Bulgaria had taken part in political deliberations and in the field in connection with important United Nations peace-keeping activities. The new generation of peace-keeping and related humanitarian relief operations had become a key factor de facto in practically all major United Nations conflict resolution endeavours since the end of cold war confrontation. Nevertheless that trend should not be a substitute for, but should, rather, complement, the concept of preventive diplomacy and the overall policy of the peaceful settlement of dispute.

9. Although peace-keeping operations would be in existence for some time, since there were numerous regional and national conflict points, the Organization was facing a growing demand for swift action to alleviate the grave

consequences of such situations and to contain future conflicts in a context of limited human and material resources, persistent financial difficulties and occasional credibility gaps.

10. The participation of a Bulgarian military contingent and of Bulgarian military observers and police in the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), one of the largest and most complex United Nations peace-keeping operations, had been a clear expression of the willingness of Bulgaria to contribute to the strengthening of the United Nations capacity for peace-keeping.

11. On the basis of experience acquired, the Bulgarian Government had formulated national policy guidelines for future participation in peace-keeping activities. The document recognized the universally accepted principles of United Nations peace-keeping. Furthermore, Bulgaria had been among the first countries to subscribe to United Nations stand-by arrangements and had offered up to 70 civilian police observers and other resources. Additional commitments were also being considered. Bulgaria had contributed to the United Nations electoral observer missions in South Africa and Mozambique and was preparing for participation in subsequent United Nations activities. Further, as part of an ongoing process of complex training, in 1994 Bulgaria had taken part in some of the first joint military exercises within the framework of the Partnership for Peace initiative of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), namely Breeze, Marine Partner and Cooperative Bridge. Bulgaria saw those multinational activities as preparing national contingents for interaction in emergency assistance and coordinated participation in United Nations peace-keeping operations.

12. The Bulgarian delegation had been actively involved in the work of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations and in the subsequent consultations on the draft resolution before the Committee. It was very encouraging that an increasing number of Member States recognized the paramount importance of the issue of peace-keeping training. Bulgaria welcomed the establishment of a training unit in the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and supported plans for its future expansion and strengthening. A number of countries, including the Nordic countries, Austria and the United Kingdom, were providing assistance and expertise for the training of Bulgarian personnel. That process could be further enhanced through the preparation by the Secretariat of basic guidelines, performance standards, manuals, correspondence teaching programmes and other teaching materials.

13. Volumes I and II of the Nordic United Nations Tactical Manual had been published in Bulgarian and Bulgaria was currently printing its own peace-keepers handbook. It was also in the process of setting up a national training centre for peace-keepers and would welcome any assistance in that endeavour. Bulgaria regarded as very beneficial the idea of setting up similar regional centres which would promote the exchange of experiences and resources.

14. The safety of United Nations peace-keeping personnel was of utmost importance and Bulgaria noted with appreciation the progress achieved by the

Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of an International Convention dealing with the Safety and Security of United Nations and Associated Personnel. He hoped that the international community would support the speedy adoption at the current session and the subsequent ratification of that important legal instrument.

15. Bulgaria was of the opinion that the meeting of regional organizations convened by the Secretary-General in New York on 1 August 1994 had provided ample opportunity to better understand and address the problems and challenges facing the international community. As a European country, Bulgaria attached particular importance to the coordination of efforts between the United Nations and European and trans-Atlantic security arrangements and structures, such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Western European Union. The issues relating to the financing of peace-keeping operations were also of concern to Bulgaria, which joined those who called for increased efforts to find urgent solutions to those substantial problems, given the Organization's financial difficulties.

16. Bulgaria, which had always championed the improvement of consultation and coordination mechanisms for a more active involvement of Member States in decision-making on peace-keeping operations, welcomed the significant progress reflected in the statement of the Security Council on 4 November 1994, which called for the further enhancement of the arrangements for consultation and exchange of information with troop-contributing countries.

17. Mr. DUMITRIU (Romania) said that peace-keeping operations continued to be the most dynamic field in the whole work of the United Nations, given the unprecedented diversification of the tasks incumbent on the new generation of peace-keeping operations. Under current circumstances, it was increasingly difficult to draw a clear-cut line between traditional peace-keeping objectives and the more demanding requirements of the extremely complex situations which the United Nations currently faced.

18. During the debates of the Security Council and the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, two main approaches had been suggested. Some preferred to stick to the traditional limited scope of peace-keeping operations, in the sense of interposing an international presence between warring parties, for example in demilitarized zones. Others, on the other hand, advocated a new approach in which peace-keeping operations should not be so limited but should encompass new objectives requiring the use of civilians, from human rights monitors to civil administrators, with the aim of re-establishing social cohesion.

19. What was at stake was a coherent interconnection between peacekeeping and peace making. There was also need for national and international efforts to bring about institutional reforms. The promise of peace should be accompanied by a promise of stability, prosperity and the democratic values favoured by the entire population.

20. The dynamic of that reality was mirrored in the consistent enrichment of the General Assembly resolution entitled "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects". Romania had welcomed the resolution adopted at the forty-eighth session of the Assembly and noted that the working group charged with elaborating a draft resolution on agenda item 79 had discussed new ideas which reflected the firm willingness of Member States to face the challenges with which the United Nations was confronted.

21. While it was true that in 1994 the Security Council had been more cautious in establishing new peace-keeping operations and expanding existing ones, and had even admitted that some operations did not fully achieve the political objectives associated with their presence in the field, that did not indicate a deadlock or decreasing interest, but rather an awareness of aspects such as the availability of resources and the capacity for rapid reaction, on the one hand, and certain political constraints, on the other. The proliferation of peace-keeping operations had brought about an inevitable contradiction between the objectives and expectations vested in the United Nations and the means available to accomplish them.

22. Despite the perception that the international community must be increasingly selective when deciding whether the United Nations should intervene in peace-keeping operations, there was also a recognition that the United Nations should strengthen its capacity to act. Towards that end, the idea of creating a stand-by system, which Romania welcomed, was gaining ground and it was reasonable to expect that it would become a reliable instrument in the service of peace. Romania took note with satisfaction of the statement by the President of the Security Council on 4 November 1994 concerning the consultations between members of the Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat on some major decisions in peace keeping, since it reflected a new attitude on the part of the Security Council and contained the promise of improving the mechanisms of consultation. Such an approach would not only affect the decision-making prerogatives of the Council but would also enhance the legitimacy and realism of its decisions.

23. While Romania welcomed the idea of enhanced support for United Nations peace-keeping activities by regional organizations and arrangements, it was important to adopt a case-by-case approach, since, inter alia, it was necessary to ascertain the impartiality of such organizations and arrangements. Not all conflicts were similar in character nor were their roots the same, and it was therefore necessary to avoid hasty generalizations which might not be supportive of the objectives of the United Nations.

24. Romania's presence in Somalia with a field hospital had been a very positive experience, since it had provided medical treatment to tens of thousands of patients, both Somali and from the United Nations, and the Romanian personnel had realized the paramount importance of United Nations support for countries in distress. Public opinion in Romania had closely followed the country's participation in the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), and that experience, added to Romania's contributions to the United Nations

Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) and the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC), had certainly increased the general awareness of the activities which the United Nations was conducting in various areas of conflict.

25. The Government of Romania was determined to continue its participation in peace-keeping operations and was considering new ways of contributing in that field. In his recent address to the Parliament of Romania, the Secretary-General had stated that it was clear that the United Nations could not take on responsibility for all the situations in the world which threatened peace and security, and that everyone must therefore bear a share of responsibility in that area. The Government of Romania was ready to assume its own share of responsibility.

26. Mr. PHOMMAHAXAY (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that, with the disappearance of the bipolar world, the international situation had been transformed and that the United Nations had an important role to play in resolving new and increasingly complex conflicts. Never before had it been dealing with so many hotbeds of tension. The complexity and rapid growth of those conflicts made it necessary to re-examine and re-evaluate various phases and aspects of United Nations peace-keeping operations so that the Organization could cope with the situation and, at the same time, fully respect the provisions of the Charter.

27. First, peace-keeping operations should strictly adhere to the principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in particular the principles of full respect for the sovereignty, sovereign equality and territorial integrity of all States and non-intervention in their internal affairs. Second, they should be mandated only at the request or with the consent of the Member State or parties involved. The bitter lessons learnt clearly indicated that, without that requirement, the problem could not be solved; on the contrary, the credibility of the United Nations could be affected. Third, they should be guided by the principle of impartiality. Fourth, a realistic mandate, clear objectives and a time-frame for the solution of problems should be formulated in each case. Last but not least, there could be no development without peace and vice versa. Accordingly, the resources earmarked for peace-keeping activities could not be used to the detriment of United Nations development activities.

28. Equally important in that context was the growing need to evolve a consultative mechanism among Member States, the Security Council and the Secretariat. The statement by the President of the Security Council dated 4 November 1994 relating to the strengthening of the arrangements for consultation among troop-contributing countries, members of the Security Council and the Secretariat was particularly important. That initiative would help to improve the management of the United Nations peace-keeping operations and enhance the transparency of the debates in the Security Council, which would contribute to building confidence among Member States. Enhanced and frequent consultations between the Security Council and neighbours to the conflict in question would also contribute to maintaining broad political support for the United Nations peace-keeping operations.

29. As the growing financial obligation which Member States must bear for peace-keeping operations was of vital importance, all countries, developed and developing alike, were encouraged to pay their contributions on time in accordance with their capacity. However, his delegation believed that the five permanent members of the Security Council had special responsibilities and obligations to fulfil under Article 17, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations. In accordance with the special scale of assessment established by resolution 3101 (XXVIII), those contributions should be paid so that peace-keeping operations could achieve their noble objectives. All States, without distinction, should contribute sincerely and positively to the maintenance of international peace and security. The Lao People's Democratic Republic, for its part, would do its utmost to help achieve a better world.

30. Mr. FOFANA (Mali) said that, while the end of the cold war had augured well for a world of peace, justice and solidarity among nations, the situation unfortunately remained tragic. All over the world, conflicts of various types proliferated, particularly, in the developing world, thereby undermining any hope of development for those countries. When the United Nations had taken over in order to resolve those conflicts, peace-keeping operations had begun to multiply and, with the establishment of the new Department of Peace-keeping Operations and with the help of all countries, it was to be hoped that the work of the United Nations would be improved in the areas of planning, coordination, training, management and financing.

31. Mali was convinced that, if proper use was made of "An Agenda for Peace", effective measures for prevention and the rational control of conflicts could be applied. That conviction had prompted it to cooperate in conflict management in Africa and elsewhere in the world.

32. Mali had been participating in peace-keeping operations ever since the tragic events of 1960 in the Congo. Today it maintained a presence in Rwanda, Burundi and Liberia and would soon participate in Haiti. In general, nearly 300 Malians were contributing in various spheres of activity to the work of the United Nations for peace throughout the world.

33. With more than 78,000 persons from various countries distributed over 18 peace-keeping operations throughout the world, that work was highly significant in terms of effort, cost and problems of all kinds for the Organization, troop-contributing States, personnel on the ground, the local population and even regional and non-governmental organizations.

34. Mali welcomed the initiatives taken by the delegations of Argentina and New Zealand concerning the need to hold consultations with troop-contributing States in order to inform them of any changes which might take place with regard to the establishment of peace-keeping operations.

35. The institutionalization of the system of communication and exchange of views among troop-contributing countries and members of the Security Council made possible both the adaptation of Security Council decisions to the realities of peace-keeping operations and greater acceptance of those decisions by all

parties, thus making them more enforceable. Consultations among Member States, the Secretary-General and the Security Council would facilitate the human and financial contributions of Member States, increase the effectiveness of peace-keeping operations and strengthen the political support of Member States for those operations.

36. Before the Security Council took a final decision to modify, extend or terminate the mandates of peace-keeping operations, troop-contributing States should be able to express their views and debate those questions.

37. Mali proposed that, in a departure from current practice, consultations should begin when the mandate of the operation was to be defined and that the dialogue should be maintained, since those measures were part of the democratization of Security Council procedures and the transparency of its work. The goal was to strengthen the moral basis for implementing decisions and to obtain the support of public opinion in troop-contributing countries. Quantitative, qualitative and conceptual changes required greater cooperation among troop-contributing States and the Security Council so that the United Nations could translate into reality the hope of all peoples of the world: peace ... humanity's greatest treasure.

38. Mr. ZHANG Yan (China) said that, while the United Nations undoubtedly played an important role through peace-keeping operations, it was also true that in recent years the situation had become much more complex and that not all operations had been successful in maintaining international peace and security. It was therefore necessary and appropriate that all aspects of those operations should be reviewed during the current session of the General Assembly.

39. The problems currently facing peace-keeping operations were multifaceted and it was essential to establish a set of guiding principles in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and on the basis of collective participation through consultations among Member States. The only way to solve problems and ensure that peace-keeping operations had a sound orientation was to analyse each case separately and determine the appropriate solution for each one.

40. It was essential for peace-keeping operations strictly to adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms governing international relations. Respect for State sovereignty and non-intervention in the domestic affairs of Member States were basic principles enshrined in the Charter. Currently, the scope of peace-keeping operations had greatly expanded and far exceeded traditional peace-keeping operations, making it increasingly important to reaffirm those principles. The involvement of the United Nations should contribute to safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries, conform to the collective will of the peoples concerned and obtain the consent and cooperation of the parties. Practice had proved time and time again that observance of those principles, both prior to and during operations, was the key to their success.

41. Peace-keeping operations were, in essence, a peaceful instrument and the purpose of the United Nations presence was to ease tension in regions of

conflict and create conditions in which the parties concerned could settle their disputes. Peace-keeping and peace-enforcement were two different concepts and a clear distinction should be made between them. The introduction of mandatory measures in some peace-keeping operations by deliberately invoking Chapter VII of the Charter had obscured that distinction, causing problems which were a source of grave concern. Neither peace-keeping operations nor humanitarian assistance should resort to force or become involved in the affairs of the parties to the conflict, and in that regard the bitter experience in Somalia should be borne in mind.

42. In order to improve the effectiveness of peace-keeping operations and ensure their success, it was necessary for the Security Council carefully to consider all the issues involved, to study the feasibility of each operation and to act within its means when authorizing the establishment of each new operation.

43. In view of the complexity of the disputes in different parts of the world, the Security Council should act with prudence and analyse the backgrounds and causes of the conflicts and disputes, take into account the desires of the parties concerned, set clear and feasible mandates and choose the right moment to become involved, depending on the importance and urgency of the situation. To that end, the United Nations should make full use of such mechanisms as fact-finding missions and technical teams. Regional organizations should be encouraged to play a more active role in those issues, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter. The United Nations could not and should not assume full responsibility for solving international conflicts and disputes.

44. It was the duty of Member States to ensure the unified command of United Nations peace-keeping operations, which was also the basis for effective accomplishment of the mandates entrusted to them by the Security Council.

45. China shared the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "Improving the capacity of the United Nations for peace-keeping" (A/48/403) that it was essential to act objectively and fairly, and to reflect the political will of the international community and that peace-keeping operations therefore should be under the exclusive operational command of the United Nations and accept no orders from any outside agency. At the same time, the United Nations should strengthen its coordination and consultation with its Member States and troop-contributing States. China appreciated the efforts made by the Security Council in that regard and welcomed the President's statement of 4 November on the question.

46. China had consistently taken an active part in United Nations peace-keeping activities and considered that they could continue to play an important role in international affairs provided that the principles set forth in the Charter were observed, advantage was taken of the experience acquired, and the rules and practices which had proved effective over the years were followed. China was ready to work with other countries and continue to contribute to United Nations peace-keeping operations.

47. Mr. TASOVSKI (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that, notwithstanding the scant likelihood of the use of weapons of mass destruction, the increasing number of conflicts was compelling the United Nations to devote an enormous amount of effort to settling disputes. Unfortunately, the results had not always been satisfactory.

48. To be effective, the Department of Peace-keeping Affairs required a clear mandate and sufficient human, material and financial resources. His country welcomed the statement by the President of the Security Council of 4 November on communication between members and non-members of the Security Council. It also supported the initiative by New Zealand and Argentina to establish consultative machinery between States members of the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat.

49. He shared the view of many delegations that the safety of peace-keeping personnel was of paramount importance. Accordingly, his delegation supported the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of an International Convention dealing with the Safety and Security of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

50. In view of his country's concern for its own security and for peace and stability in the region of the Balkans, he stressed the key role played by the preventive deployment of a contingent of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in his country. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, military units had been deployed as a measure of preventive diplomacy, a measure that could establish an excellent precedent. The deployment of that force was of great importance for the security of his country, as it prevented the spillover of the war and strengthened peace and security in the region. The cooperation provided by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and the local authorities to the force was exemplary and would remain so, as the mission was a preventive one and its mandate differed from that of UNPROFOR in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He reiterated his country's request for the mission to remain under the direct supervision of the Secretary-General.

51. He said that his country was prepared to develop, in cooperation with the Secretariat, arrangements for participating in peace-keeping operations. Lastly, he expressed his support for the draft resolution before the Committee.

52. Mr. GIOVAS (Greece), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the previous speaker had employed an incorrect term to designate his State and drew attention to Security Council resolution 817 (1993), by which that State had been admitted as a Member of the United Nations under the provisional name of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

53. Mr. TASOVSKI (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Greece had incorrectly interpreted resolution 817 (1993). His country's name was the Republic of Macedonia and no decision or resolution of the United Nations could prevent it from using that name.

54. Mr. GIOVAS (Greece) said that the question of the interpretation of Security Council resolution 817 (1993) did not arise as the resolution was perfectly clear. If it were possible for the resolution to be interpreted as authorizing the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to be referred to by any other name, it would be meaningless.

55. Mr. TASOVSKI (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that he stood by his earlier assertions.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.